

Frequently Asked Questions for Vector Control

1. When are you going to come spray my area?

This depends on factors such as the number and type of mosquitoes present, if we know or suspect the presence of disease, and how this compares to the other areas of the county experiencing a similar problem. If the mosquito population is low and there's no disease potential in an area – it doesn't need to be sprayed. Normally the spray truck is out after midnight, however, situations arise that may cause them to come out earlier. If you hear & see the truck - go indoors. The drivers are instructed to turn off the spray when they encounter people.

2. What should I do if I am allergic to pesticides or if I have honey bees?

If you live in Richland County outside the Columbia City Limits notify the Vector Control program with your name, address and phone number. They will provide you with the necessary paperwork so they may accommodate your concerns.

3. Who called in this complaint against my property?

We cannot provide this information, nor can we confirm or deny your suspicions. This allows a citizen to file a request without fear of retaliation. We also remind citizens that even though someone's property is unsightly, it doesn't mean that health violations are present.

4. Mosquitoes can transmit all kinds of diseases, so why can't they give you AIDS?

Viruses that a mosquito can transmit go through an amplification process (they reproduce a lot) in the mosquito's body. The AIDS virus is digested as food and does not have the ability to reproduce inside the mosquito's body.

5. What kinds of diseases can mosquitoes spread in Richland County?

We have mosquitoes that have the ability to transmit EEE, WNV, Dengue, Malaria and Dog Heartworm. However, the disease has to be present for the mosquito to be able to transmit it. There are cases that turn up in the media about malaria on occasion, but all recent incidents of this in South Carolina have been imported. This means that someone travels to another country, contracts the disease and is already infected when they return.

6. How can I protect myself from a disease transmitted by mosquitoes?

Stay inside when mosquitoes are most active. Wear mosquito repellent according to label directions. Prevent mosquitoes from breeding around your home by emptying water holding containers

7. I just bought a mosquito magnet & it said for me to contact my local mosquito control program to find out if we have Asian Tiger mosquitoes in my area?

If you live in a subdivision, chances are this is your biggest nuisance mosquito. You may recognize this mosquito by looking for a small black mosquito with a white stripe down the center of its back. The white line is so striking that it may appear silver to some people. The legs have white bands. These bands may appear as white speckles on the legs to some people.

8. Is there anything I can spray around my yard to help with my mosquito problem?

Probably. If your yard has a lot of bushes and/or vegetation you may be able to do a barrier treatment. Begin by going to the store of your choice like a home improvement store, the garden section of a department store or your local feed & seed. Next, look to see what products they have available that say they will kill mosquitoes. Then, before you buy anything read the label. Make sure that the product you select will not damage your plants, see how long the product will last on the plants (some pesticides breakdown in sunlight and will only remain in the environment for a few hours). If everything looks acceptable and the price is ok – then buy it and use it as the label directs.

9. Can you check this tick to see if it has Lyme disease or Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever?

No, but we can assist you with identifying what type of tick it is and provide information to help you decide your course of action.

10. What's the best way for me to get rid of all these fleas?

Use your selected products according to the label directions. Be sure to treat inside & outside the home and the pet all at the same time. Be sure to conduct the follow-up treatment according to the label's schedule.

For additional information check the following websites:

At the Department of Health and Environmental Control's site go to West Nile Information under "What's new?" www.scdhec.net

At the Center for Disease Control's site you may select from an index at the top of the page and learn about mosquito-borne (transmitted) diseases www.cdc.gov

At the American Mosquito Control Association's site you can find mosquito information and additional links www.mosquito.org